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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- ELECTION CAMPAIGN PROCEEDS SMOOTHLY, SO FAR

REF: JAKARTA 687 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Presidential campaigning continues--so far without incident--in eastern Indonesia's restive Papua and West Papua provinces. President Yudhoyono--as he does nationally--maintains a significant lead in the region although Jusuf Kalla's Golkar Party remains strong. The police and military are maintaining neutrality in a region where there is distrust of the central authorities. Local officials expect some minor logistical problems in the sprawling region on election day. Mission plans to send an officer to the region to observe the July 8 voting. END SUMMARY.

QUIET, SO FAR

¶2. (C) Campaigning for Indonesia's July 8 presidential vote continues in the restive Papua region of eastern Indonesia. Police and military officials are maintaining a low-profile but vigilant posture on security matters. Given lingering Papuan resentment toward Jakarta, and the continued presence of separatist groups, violence remains a possibility. (Note: Per reftel, there was some violence during the timeframe of the April parliamentary elections.)

PRESIDENT MAINTAINS LEAD

¶3. (C) As he does nationally, our contacts agree that President Yudhoyono maintains a strong lead in Papua, largely on the strength of his personal popularity there. (Note: There are no reliable provincial-level opinion poll results available.) Yudhoyono's anti-corruption stance and support for the region's Special Autonomy Law have gone down well in the region. SBY and his running mate Boediono (one name only) have both held campaign events in Papua.

¶4. (C) Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat (PD) has also made inroads in Papua. PD candidates captured four of the region's thirteen legislative seats in April. Oceans and Fisheries Minister Freddy Numberi, the most prominent ethnic-Papuan politician on the national scene, has campaigned extensively for PD and SBY in the region.

GOLKAR STILL STRONG

¶5. (C) Vice President Jusuf Kalla, who broke with Yudhoyono to run on his own, remains in second place. Kalla's Golkar party has long dominated Papuan politics and retains a strong grass-roots organization in the region. (Note: Golkar candidates took five legislative seats in April, giving it the largest block of Papuan spots in the national

legislature. This, despite Golkar's slide nationally.) However, Kalla lacks Yudhoyono's personal popularity among Papuans. Golkar operatives in the region have attempted to highlight Kalla's "outsider"--that is non-Javanese--status in an effort to appeal to ethnic Papuans. (Note: An ethnic Muslim Bugis, Kalla is the only non-Javanese among the six presidential and vice presidential candidates.) Kalla has also campaigned in the region.

LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS LIKELY

¶6. (C) While campaigning has remained peaceful, provincial government officials told us they expect some minor logistical problems. Chief among these will be the difficulties of getting voting materials to the region's many remote, mountainous locations. As it did during the legislative elections, the military will provide logistical support to election officials. None of our contacts expect these difficulties to be so severe as to cast doubt on the results (even if there are problems in Papua, the region is lightly populated and voting there is unlikely to impact the overall national race). As it did for the April parliamentary elections, Mission will send an officer to provincial capital Jayapura to observe the voting.

HUME